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DRAFTEuropean Communist PartiesI Overview and Principal Judgments

1. Euro-Communism is ~~not yet a real thing~~ ^{little more than} but a label denoting certain shared ^{tendencies within} ~~attitudes of~~ the Italian, French, and Spanish Communist parties, all of which are now playing important political roles in their respective nations and may soon play more. The other Communist parties of Western Europe are marginal for purposes of this analysis.
2. The three ^{major} Communist parties are ^{very} ~~more~~ different ~~than~~ ^{even more} ~~all~~ and they each face ~~very~~ different political prospects and problems. They have come to hold in common a few important doctrinal positions, however, which set them apart from the Soviet and East European models and which have been receiving more emphasis in each party as they have maneuvered to appeal to more voters. For example they assert the primacy of their countries' national interests ^{as they perceive them} when these clash with Soviet state interests, they declare that they do not regard the Soviet system as a ^{not applicable} ~~valid~~ model for their countries, and they have stated (but not proved) their commitment to pluralistic democracy. These tendencies run deeper ST in the Italian ~~and Spanish~~ parties ~~than in the French party~~.

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3. There is evidence of considerable strain and debate over future strategy and tactics within each party's leadership group, between the leaders and segments of the rank and file, and between the three different national parties. Nonetheless, despite their differences with the USSR and among themselves, the European Communists are still Communists, and not socialists or social democrats. They still hold to certain classical Communist practices which distinguish them from other parties of the European left:

- They conduct party affairs by the Leninist model of "democratic centralism," i.e., requiring acceptance at all party levels of policies laid down at the top.
- They remain broadly internationalist in outlook, with considerable residual loyalty to the USSR as the first ~~and most powerful~~ Communist state. This loyalty and several decades of opposition to the US and NATO Europe, make them instinctively hostile to the US which they ~~see~~ see as the embodiment of capitalism and imperialism.
- The French and Italian parties have very different views on economic policy, but they and the Spanish party profess an ultimate vision of a Europe freed ~~alike~~ ^{domination} from US and Soviet ~~bloes~~, building a Marxist society which avoids both the Soviet model and the trap they believe the other European leftist parties

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have fallen into--i.e., helping to administer capitalism without appreciably changing it.

-They are vague on precisely how they would do this, partly because they probably don't know themselves and partly because (like other political parties) they are reluctant to give detailed answers before they have to, lest they lose support on either left or right.

4. Similarities ^{among} ~~between~~ the three parties are interesting, but the heart of the matter is the separate, very different ⁱⁿ problems ~~of~~ Italy, France, and Spain.

Italy

--The PCI is much the largest and most advanced European Communist party, having the longest record of working with other parties, of avoiding dogmatism, and confrontation with the church, of ^{establishing a favorable} ~~piling up a~~ ^{image for} ~~good record of~~ administrative competence in cities and regions where it has run local governments, and -- ^{at least recently --} of pursuing a relatively moderate line in fiscal and labor programs--more moderate than other Italian parties on the left. The PCI has been helped by the fatigue of the Christian Democrats after 31 years in power. It is, in effect, already a part of the Italian governing establishment.

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- The PCI's political leverage derives from the government's critical dependence on it for benevolent abstention in parliament ~~and from its indispensable role in inducing Italian labor to accept austerity measures.~~ *and the gov't need of its cooperation*
- Formal PCI entry into the Italian government is by no means assured, and it is even possible that in new elections the party would fall short of the 34 percent peak it reached in 1976. Odds are, however, that it will not ^{much} lose ground in any new elections, and in any case it ^{remain} will be one of Italy's two principal parties for the foreseeable future.
- As the PCI has come nearer power in the last few years, ~~its policy on NATO and the Warsaw Pact has switched from advocating a "Europe without blocs" to a recognition that the blocs will not soon disappear.~~ *it has shown new energy* *division of Europe into* Communist leader Berlinguer has even stated that he feels more comfortable with Italy in NATO than otherwise. This tendency does not make the PCI pro-NATO in any effective sense, merely less militant and more cautious. *
- The PCI is particularly concerned lest a post-Tito Yugoslavia slip back into the Soviet orbit. Italian Communists maintain close ties with the Yugoslav leadership and a Soviet move against Yugoslav independence would present the PCI with a painful dilemma if NATO

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were to respond in support of Yugoslavia. The PCI would be subject to conflicting pressures, but some members at least would probably support the NATO move.

--For some years the PCI has supported Italian membership in the EC as essential to Italy's interests. It has shown itself ~~acutely~~ ^{that} aware of economic realities, ~~which have place~~ ^{what it can} important constraints on ~~Communist~~ behavior.

The party is not to be seen as a party of the left (and that's not a bad thing) but...

France

--The PCF has a good chance of entering the government through the next parliamentary elections (probably in March 1978). But it has paid a high price in joining with the French Socialists in 1972, an alliance which has enabled the Socialists to ^{become the} grow substantially while ~~the PCF has shrunk slightly~~ ^{membership}. It is now the junior partner, where it once was the dominant voice ^{on} the left in France.

--Should the Left Alliance form a government, that coalition would probably fall apart in the first year or two. Principle ^A issues of contention would be chiefly domestic, with the PCF pushing for extensive nationalizations and a radical restructuring of French society. A falling out between the PCF and the Socialists could lead to a political realignment in which the Socialists would join with some centrist elements in a new center-

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left alignment or it could lead to a new center-right arrangement. In short, if the PCF does enter the French government, it is much less likely than the PCI in Italy to stay in over the long term.

--The PCF's adoption of the relatively benign ^{aspects} ~~effects~~ of Euro-Communism is far more recent and considerably less credible than in the case of the Spanish and the Italian parties. Whether ^{the trend} ~~destalinization~~ will accelerate as the PCF gets closer to power, or be reversed by alterations within the Left Alliance is conjectural.

--The PCF takes a more negative attitude than either the PCI or PCE toward NATO and the European Community. This is consistent with the mainstream of French sentiment as compared with Italian, and the parallels between PCF thinking on French foreign policy and the Gaullist tradition reflect deliberate strategy on the PCF's part.

We doubt that the PCF would push for outright French departure from the Alliance, but it would certainly ^{to reduce the communist} ~~press for a policy more~~ ^{which} ~~sharp~~ than Giscard has ^{postured} ~~pursued~~.

Spain

--The Spanish Communist Party has more in common with with Italian than with the French Communists.

--Its economic ^{policy is} ~~policy~~ ^{designed to appeal to the middle} class as well as to the workers.

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--It seeks recognition from and political alliance with groups on the center-left, including its principal rival for the working-class vote--the Spanish Socialist Workers Party.

--Its foreign policy appears more moderate than that of the Spanish Socialists in that it does not ^{is. actually push} ~~argue~~ for the removal of US bases ^{at the expense} ~~against~~ Spain's joining NATO, ^{but has indicated it would accept the decision of the Sp. people on this issue}

--It is thoroughly hostile to the idea of subordinating its interests to Soviet objectives. Party leaders remember that the Soviets organized an abortive counter-party in an attempt to unseat General Secretary Carrillo in the 1960s and 1970s.

5. Cooperation between the major European Communist parties is a changing and uneven pattern.

--Some Italian Communists consider their French brethren barely regenerate Stalinists. They are as suspicious of the PCF's recent "conversion" as are many non-Communists.

--In the economic sphere, the PCI wants to redirect a sick economy. It thinks the public sector is, under present conditions, already ^{enough} ~~too~~ large. The French Communists, by contrast, want to break the power of capitalist owners and managers of all large and middle-sized enterprises in France.

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--Italian and French Communist attitudes also diverge on the question of Europe. PCI leaders believe that Italy needs the European Community, and hope to alter it from within toward a more socialist orientation. The PCF sees the EC as a check on future left-wing policies and an infringement on French sovereignty. This would make it difficult for the parties to adopt consistently common programs within the European Parliament.

--The Spanish party's position on these questions is more akin to the Italian than the French, but also less precise, reflecting Spain's tentative political situation and relative isolation in Europe.

6. Notwithstanding policy differences, suspicions, and tensions among the Italian, French, and Spanish Communists, they ^{have} ~~share~~ enough in common ~~not least of all serious concern~~ ^{so} ~~over Moscow's intentions~~ that Euro-Communism has begun to take on some embryonic programmatic and structural form. In recent years a number of steps, including a serious ^{series} of ~~party~~ party meetings (without the Soviets), have been ⁱⁿ ~~taken~~ taken to coordinate policies and tactics and to share facilities and information on issues of common interest. The Italians, French, and Spanish are joined in this by ^{certain} ~~most~~ other West European Communist parties, with the prospect that over the longer run the Euro-Communist ^{label} ~~label~~ will take on much more real flesh than it has today.

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7. The governments and mainstream parties of Europe look on the European Communist problem with concern, coupled with varying mixtures of hope that the Communists will not gain power in Italy or France, or that, if they do, the benign rhetoric of Euro-Communism will be confirmed and consolidated into political practices. *Some social democratic leaders* ~~The left-of-center~~ parties of northern Europe are particularly hopeful with respect to the PCI, ~~partly because of its better record and~~ partly because of their low opinion of the Italian Christian Democrats. European governments and centrist parties repudiate the idea of open external interference to affect the political course in France, Italy, or Spain; however, they generally approve the West German approach of conditioning economic assistance to Italy on improved performance by the Christian Democratic government. Various Northern political parties, particularly West German, give moral and financial support to non-Communist forces in Italy and Spain, while in some cases maintaining dialogues with the PCI as well.

8. EC member countries, and particularly West Germany, are worried about what PCF and/or PCI entry into government would mean for Western Europe's economic health and for EC institutions over the longer run. The immediate concern is with the economic instability that many fear would ensue in France or Italy if Communists assumed a share of power. EC

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members also fear that Communist-influenced governments might resort to protectionist and other measures that would violate ~~the spirit, if not the letter, of~~ EC agreements.

9. Even more basic is the West European concern over the obvious philosophical differences between Communist economic theories and the ideological underpinnings of the EC. In addition, Communist participation in EC governments could also be expected to hinder--and perhaps even derail--a workable US-EC dialogue. Many West European leaders, encouraged by the US administration's willingness to pursue that dialogue, fear that Communist involvement would serve to abort this favorable trend and in the end incline the US more toward bilateral dealings with individual EC countries.

10. The question of the PCI or PCF entering NATO governments, and the likely effects of this on the Alliance, ^{one matter of} ~~can be~~
 ~~assessed variously.~~ ^{rather seen through Europe} At the very least, it would raise trouble-
 ^{particularly in the nuclear energy field, as well} ~~some matters of security, and uneven participation by the affected~~
 ~~member. But, in this view, such problems could be handled in~~
 ~~ways comparable to the precedents set for Portugal and Iceland.~~

A more somber interpretation is that it would call into ques-
 tion the unity and coherence of the Alliance, and might result
 in fragmenting it, reducing it to a North European arrangement
 with the US which would in effect be a US-German partnership.

Cohesion

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11. Precisely what the effects would be would, of course, depend heavily on which government was involved, what ^{Governmental} positions the Communists held and on what terms, and what NATO issues are being considered. Of course neither party stands to gain by defining its stance in detail before the fact, since any precise declarations would court adverse reactions on either the right or left at home and either from the Soviets or the West abroad.

--In general, Communist declarations about accepting NATO are probably genuine in the sense that neither the PCI nor the PCF would press for precipitous withdrawal.

--Beyond this, it is clear only that either party, once in the government, would ^{generally} ~~probably~~ prove obstructionist regarding ^{NATO matter} ~~any efforts to invigorate the Alliance or draw it closer together.~~ The parties' ^{efforts in this respect} ~~task~~ will be facilitated to the extent they can ride ~~the tide of~~ prevailing nationalist sentiment, ⁵ ~~which has the same net effect.~~ And they would be particularly opposed to their governments cooperating with any US political or military efforts ^{outside} ~~going beyond~~ the NATO region ~~itself~~ --e.g., the Middle East and Africa. ~~(This subject is addressed in greater detail in Section .)~~

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12. In the Soviet view, the apparently improving fortunes of the European Communist parties gives rise to ~~very~~ mixed feelings. While the Soviets initially welcomed the trend, at least since 1975 they have shown themselves extremely concerned that it carries threats to their interests, and this ambivalence becomes more pronounced the closer to power the European Communists appear to get. *(There are differences of view in the USSR as to how to handle this question, which are elaborated in Section V)*

13. The Soviets obviously want the support European Communists give them on major foreign policy issues, and would welcome a weakening of NATO and divisions between the US and European governments. *Offsetting* ~~balancing~~ these hopes, however, are fears on several grounds:

--The impact on the cohesion of the Communist movement.

The Western parties' assertions of independence are one more blow to Moscow's leadership of a movement already fragmented by Chinese and Yugoslav heresies. Moscow fears that the price of a share of power for Communist parties in the West will be increasing defiance of the USSR.

--The impact on the Soviet position in East Europe.

Already concerned about stability in this area as a result of serious economic problems, Moscow shows alarm lest ideological infection from West European Communists spread to Eastern Europe, a fear intensified

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by the Westerners' support for human rights and dissidents in the East.

--The impact on general Soviet foreign policy objectives towards the West. Moscow probably fears that neither the PCI nor the PCF could enter government under conditions that held out much hope of lasting success. The risk therefore would be not only that their credibility would be damaged but the consequent turmoil would produce a conservative backlash, domestically and in the West generally, which would jeopardize ~~the advantages Moscow hopes to gain from detente~~ *and the advantages Moscow hopes to gain from it.*

14. We do not conclude from this that Moscow would oppose the entry into government of the French or Italian parties. On the contrary, it would be publicly pleased and privately hope that a number of opportunities would open up as a result. But these hopes would be heavily qualified by apprehensions, and the net result would be to induce caution and wait-and-see into Soviet policy calculations.

15. US attitudes toward Communist parties in Europe are an object of acute interest to Europeans of all political stripes. They are well aware that the present administration has modified the US stance on this question, adopting a more pragmatic and flexible attitude than in the past, though without abandoning opposition to Communists in NATO governments. Most of the

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European center-left elements see the change as realistic. They believe that the previous US policy was no longer effective in hindering Communist electoral prospects, and was in fact likely to increase the difficulties if the Communists should gain a role in the Italian or French governments. On the other hand, some of the conservative forces--especially in France and Italy--~~regret~~ ^{are concerned that} the shift from stiff US declaratory opposition to Communists in European governments, ~~be-~~ ~~lieving~~ ~~change~~ will help the latter to power. All across the spectrum, there is considerable uncertainty about precisely what present US policy is and precisely how the US will react if Communists do enter the French or Italian governments. The dilemma is that if the US stays silent, it adds currency to the notion that it is ready to accept Communists in NATO governments; yet public (and even some private) declarations to the opposite effect trigger charges of interference.

16. This is an intelligence assessment and not a policy study. Possible courses of action and declaratory approaches to deal with the dilemma are outside the proper scope of this paper. We have set forth, however, how the major European governments and the main European Communist parties see the US posture, and what our allies hope (or fear) US policy will be. This is discussed in Section VIII.)

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